

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STOCKH 03104 311544Z

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TAGS: PINT, SW

SUBJECT: ELECTION CAMPAIGN RESURRECTED

REF: STOCKHOLM 3078

SUMMARY: THE SWEDISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS HEATING UP AGAIN AFTER THE INTERRUPTIONS OF THE LAST FEW DAYS. THREE LEADERS APPEARED ON TELEVISION AUGUST 30 AND ENERGETICALLY PUSHED THEIR PROGRAMS, GIVING THE ELC-TORATE A CHANCE TO CONTRAST TYPES AND PERSONALITIES, BUT BREAKING NO NEW GROUND ON ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE SWEDISH ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS BACK TO THE FORE-FRONT OF ATTENTION AS THE BANK DRAMA AFTERMATH FADES AND THE CONCERN FOR KING'S LIFE IS MOMENTARILY ALLAYED.

2. AUGUST 30 SAW THREE PARTY LEADERS IN MAJOR CAMPAIGN EFFORTS: CENTER LEADER FALLDIN ON RADIO/TV INTERVIEW, PALME AND MODERATE LEADER BOHMAN IN A SLAMBANG DEBATE, PART OF WHICH WAS TELEVISED. CANVASSING BY ALL PARTIES

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PAGE 02 STOCKH 03104 311544Z

NOW IN HIGH GEAR, AND THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS ATTEMPTING

TO BRING UP THEIR HEAVY ARTILLERY VIA UNIONS (SEPTTEL).

3. THE PALME-BOHMAN DEBATE WAS STAGED IN THE HUGE GOTHENBURG INDOOR ARENA CALLED SCANDINAVIUM IN FRONT OF 11,000 PEOPLE, WHICH MAKES IT THE LARGEST INDOOR POLITICAL RALLY EVER HELD IN SWEDEN. BOTH SIDES CONSIDERED IT A KIND OF SECOND ELECTION KICKOFF AFTER INTERRUPTIONS OF THE LAST WEEK. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC SUPPORTERS WERE IN MAJORITY, AND BOHMAN HAD TO ENDURE SOME JEERING, BUT HIS CLAUQUE ALSO GOT IN SOME LICKS.

4. THE MAIN DEBATE TOPIC WAS UNEMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMY IN GENERAL, WITH BOHMAN ATTACKING GOVERNMENT FAILURES IN THESE AREAS. PALME WAS INCISIVE, CUTTING, EMOTIONAL AND VERY EFFECTIVE AT REPARTEE. BOHMAN'S STYLE WAS LESS FLORID BUT HE PROVED TO BE ABLE DEBATER.

5. ON FOREIGN POLICY PALME, ASKED HIS OPINION OF SOVIET UNION, SAID: "I CAN SAY THAT SOVIET UNION IS A COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP TOWARD WHICH WE FEEL SAME LOATHING AS FOR ALL DICTATORSHIPS." HE ADDED THAT HE FELT SAME DISGUST NOW OVER SOVIET OCCUPATION OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA AS ON DAY OF THE INVASION. PALME ALSO MENTIONED VIETNAM AND ACCUSED MODERATE LEADER OF LACKING IN UNDERSTANDING OF OPPRESSION AND SUFFERINGS OF PEOPLE OF VIETNAM. BOHMAN COUNTERED WITH A REFERENCE TO A SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY HANDBOOK IN WHICH IT IS STATED THAT ALL PARTIES STAND UNITED BEHIND SWEDEN'S VIETNAM POLICIES.

6. PRECEDING THE DEBATE WAS A TV INTERVIEW WITH CENTER LEADER FALLDIN (WHICH WAS LATER CONTINUED ON RADIO). FALLDIN REMAINED STOLID AND COMPOSED, AS USUAL, ALTHOUGH PRESSED HARD AT TIMES BY THE JOURNALISTS, PARTICULARLY ON THE CENTER PARTY PROMISE TO CREATE 100,000 NEW JOBS IF ELECTED. ON THIS FALLDIN REFERRED TO A 15-POINT PROGRAM, BUT WAS NOT VERY SPECIFIC ON DETAILS. LIKE THE OTHERS, FALLDIN SEES UNEMPLOYMENT AS THE BIGGEST ISSUE NOW. FALLDIN DID NOT BREAK ANY NEW GROUND, REPEATING EARLIER STATEMENTS. HE DID NOT TOUCH FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

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PAGE 03 STOCKH 03104 311544Z

COMMENT: ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS REVIVING. FOR THE FIRST TIME DURING CAMPAIGN SWEDISH VOTERS HAD CHANCE TO SEE LEADERS OF THE THREE BIGGEST PARTIES PERFORM IN SAME EVENING. THERE COULD HARDLY HAVE BEEN GREATER CONTRAST OF STYLES AND PERSONALITIES THAN BETWEEN PRESUMPTIVE PRIME MINISTER FALLDIN AND PRESENT PM PALME. PALME WAS DYNAMIC, CHARISMATIC, AND BRILLIANT IN DEBATE. FALLDIN, WHO WAS APPEARING IN A CALMER SETTING, WAS PHLEGMATIC,

UNEXCITING YET EXUDED AIR OF SOLIDITY AND STRENGTH.
PALME SHOWED HIMSELF A MASTER OF THE SWEDISH LANGUAGE,
WHILE FALLDIN SPOKE AS IF READING FROM A DULL TOME.
FALLDIN SYMBOLIZES THE "OLD SWEDEN", PALME THE NEW.
VOTERS GOT A GOOD CHANCE THURSDAY EVENING TO COMPARE
THE TWO.
OLSEN

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